**Project Charter**

**Project Name:** The Compliance Gateway: Risk Mitigation and Data Integration for Cost Transparency **Department:**Marketing, Information Technology (IT) **Focus Area:** Customer Experience, Compliance and Risk Mitigation**Product/Process:** Prospective Student Financial Cost Calculator Component **Prepared By:** Kate Herrick, Project Manager

**Project Charter Version Control**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Version** | **Date** | **Author** | **Change Description** |
| 1.0 | October 2025 | K. Herrick | Initial draft, based on Retrospective and SWOT analysis. |

**1. Project Charter Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to successfully implement a student-facing cost calculator component on Arborwood University’s commercial websites and paid media pages. The core goal is to address the critical market gap related to cost transparency that impedes prospect conversion. Unlike the previous attempt, this project is explicitly chartered to design and enforce a formal **Legal and Compliance Gateway** to secure approval before development proceeds, thereby mitigating the litigation risk identified as the single largest threat to the solution’s viability. Additionally, the project will implement new, automated data integration infrastructure to ensure calculation accuracy and reduce long-term maintenance labor.

**2. Project Executive Summary**

This charter outlines the plan to build a personalized, three-step AEM component that allows prospective baccalaureate, master's, and certificate students to estimate their degree cost and time commitment based on transfer credits and enrollment volume. This is a strategic imperative designed to capture an estimated **$35 million annual revenue increase**. The project is structured specifically to overcome two organizational challenges identified in the SWOT analysis: the necessity of **legal approval** (to comply with consumer protection and financial aid regulations) and the **limited data integration** (to ensure the real-time accuracy required for compliance). Success is defined not just by technical delivery, but by securing and maintaining a certified legal approval for the component's functionality and content.

**3. Business Needs**

Drivers for this project include:

* **Conversion Improvement:** The lack of personalized cost transparency is the single biggest obstacle preventing prospects from requesting additional information on the commercial website.
* **Competitive Differentiation:** There is a clear market opportunity to create a "best-in-class" tool, as competitors rely on static tuition tables.
* **Risk Mitigation:** The previous project failed due to regulatory and litigation risk associated with inaccurate or misleading financial projections. This project must resolve that risk.
* **Data Integrity and Efficiency:** The need for accurate, real-time calculation data requires replacing current manual processes with automated data fetches from core student administration systems.

**4. Business Case**

The project will address both a strategic market opportunity and a critical compliance threat. By implementing a cost calculator component, Arborwood is positioned to capture an estimated **$8.9 million revenue increase in Year 1** (a 10% corporate revenue growth) and a potential **$39 million gain over the solution's lifespan**, based on a minimal estimated investment spend of $425,000. Successful implementation requires the investment in **Compliance Governance** (the formal legal gateway) to ensure the technical solution is legally viable and maintainable.

**5. Project Requirements**

* **Legal Compliance Gateway:** Mandatory, documented approval from the Legal and Compliance organization must be obtained before development begins. This process must be rigorous enough to mitigate risks related to FTC and DoE consumer protection laws.
* **Component Functionality:** The solution must be a three-step wizard component in Adobe Experience Manager (AEM), providing estimates for cost, time, remaining credits, and savings for baccalaureate, master's, and certificate programs.
* **Data Integration:** A new API call and data storage component must be developed in AEM to retrieve real-time, accurate cost data from the University’s core student administration systems.
* **Content Customization:** Content Producers ("Authors") must be able to customize disclaimers, instructional copy, tool tips, and other supplemental content via the AEM authoring interface.
* **Output Accuracy:** Calculations must correctly factor in tuition caps, scholarships, and transfer credit parameters for dozens of different degree programs.

**6. Configuration Management Requirements**

Configuration management for this project will focus on the following key assets:

* **Project Documentation:** All documents (Charter, Requirements, Legal Sign-off artifacts) will be stored in a centralized, version-controlled repository.
* **Code:** All custom AEM component code, JavaScript logic, and API servlet code will be managed in a source control system.
* **Compliance Artifacts:** The formal legal and compliance sign-off document for the calculator's content and logic must be versioned and stored with change traceability.
* **Change Requests:** Any request for changes to the project scope, schedule, budget, or the *calculation logic itself*must be formally submitted, reviewed by a Change Control Board (CCB), and **must include re-approval from the Legal stakeholder.**

**7. Project Boundaries**

The scope of this project is limited to:

* Development and deployment of the custom three-step cost calculator AEM component.
* Development of the new API integration infrastructure to fetch real-time data from core student administration systems.
* Applicability is limited to baccalaureate, master's, and certificate programs only. The project does not include:
* Development of a similar calculator for doctoral programs (due to timeline variability).
* Any changes to the core business logic or financial data within the student administration source systems.
* Marketing campaign execution or media ad buys associated with the component's launch.

**8. Milestones**

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| **Milestone** | **Target Completion Date** |
| Project Charter Approval | October 2025 |
| **Legal/Compliance Gateway Sign-Off (MANDATORY)** | November 2025 |
| Detailed Requirements & Design Completion | December 2025 |
| API/Data Integration Infrastructure Build Complete | February 2026 |
| AEM Component Development Complete | April 2026 |
| System Testing and UAT Completion | May 2026 |
| Production Deployment | June 2026 |
| Project Closure and Post-Implementation Review | July 2026 |

**9. Work Breakdown Structure**

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| **ID** | **Description** |
| **1.0 Initiation & Compliance Gateway** | **(Focus on Risk Mitigation)** |
| 1.1 | Project Charter Approval |
| 1.2 | Formal Legal/Compliance Review and Content Sign-off |
| 1.3 | Team Kickoff and Requirements Finalization |
| **2.0 Planning & Design** | **(Focus on Data Integrity)** |
| 2.1 | Detailed Use Case & Calculation Logic Definition |
| 2.2 | Data Mapping and API Specification with Student Admin Systems |
| 2.3 | Test Plan Development (Including Compliance Scenarios) |
| **3.0 Execution** | **(Focus on Technical Delivery)** |
| 3.1 | Back-end API Servlet and Data Integration Build |
| 3.2 | New AEM Data Repository Component Development |
| 3.3 | Front-end AEM Calculator Wizard Component Development |
| **4.0 Testing** | **(Focus on Accuracy & Liability)** |
| 4.1 | Unit Testing (Front-end Logic and Calculation Accuracy) |
| 4.2 | Integration Testing (API fetch and Data Consistency) |
| 4.3 | User Acceptance Testing (UAT) |
| 4.4 | **Legal/Compliance Final UAT Checkpoint** |
| **5.0 Deployment & Closure** | **(Focus on Handover)** |
| 5.1 | Production Deployment |
| 5.2 | User Training (Marketing Content Authors) |
| 5.3 | Post-Implementation Review & Lessons Learned |

**10. Project Stakeholders**

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| **Stakeholder Name** | **Organization Role** | **Vested Interest / Impact** |
| Executive Sponsor | TBD (VP/EVP of Enrollment) | Final budget authority and success metric accountability. |
| **Mike Goettl** | **Site Supervisor/IT Director** | Oversees IT development team; key advocate for compliance; leads deployment. |
| **Legal Counsel** | Legal & Compliance Team | **Critical Authority:** Must provide formal sign-off on content, logic, and disclaimers. |
| Marketing Director | Marketing/Product Management | Owns the revenue goal; defines front-end requirements and content needs. |
| Business Analyst | Information Technology | Defines use cases, calculation logic, and data mapping requirements. |
| Development Team | Information Technology | Builds the AEM component and API integration. |
| Content Authors | Marketing/Web Operations | Daily users of the component authoring features. |

**11. High Level Budget**

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| **Project Expense** | **Estimated Cost** | **Rationale** |
| Labor (IT Development, BA, QA) | $325,000 | 6-month, 8-person team development effort (approximate). |
| Legal/Compliance Review Time | $75,000 | Dedicated external/internal time for risk assessment and sign-off. |
| Technology (AEM Licenses, API costs) | $25,000 | Assumes leveraging existing AEM infrastructure; minimal net-new licensing. |
| **Total Estimated Cost** | **$425,000** | Required investment to achieve the $35M annual revenue increase. |

**12. Conditions**

**12.1 Project Assumptions**

* The funding and dedicated IT resources necessary for the entire 6-month development effort will be maintained and protected from marketing churn.
* The Legal and Compliance department will dedicate the necessary time in November 2025 to perform the formal review and provide sign-off.
* The core student administration systems have an API available (or can have one readily developed) that provides the required cost data with real-time accuracy.

**12.2 Project Risks**

* **R-1: Regulatory Veto:** **(CRITICAL)** The Legal department may not approve the component under any circumstances, rendering the entire project unsalvageable, similar to the previous attempt. (Mitigation: Legal Gateway 1.2 is a mandatory, early gate).
* **R-2: IT Skepticism:** IT team's historical frustration with abandoned marketing projects (SWOT Weakness) may lead to resistance or disengagement. (Mitigation: Leadership must clearly communicate the permanent strategic value and commitment to the project.)
* **R-3: Data Integration Complexity:** The API/source system integration proves significantly more complex or costly than estimated, impacting the timeline and budget.

**12.3 Project Constraints**

* **Compliance:** The component **must** adhere to all federal, state, and institutional regulations regarding financial aid and cost transparency (FTC, HEA).
* **Timeline:** The solution must be deployed by **June 2026** to capture the subsequent enrollment period.
* **Scope:** Limited to baccalaureate, master's, and certificate programs only.
* **Platform:** Must be implemented as a custom component within the existing **Adobe Experience Manager (AEM)**platform.

**13. Acceptance Criteria**

The project will be considered complete and successful when the following criteria are met:

* Formal, documented Legal and Compliance approval is secured for the calculator's content, logic, and disclaimers.
* The new API call successfully fetches and standardizes real-time cost data from core student administration systems.
* The AEM calculator component is fully deployed to production and successfully calculates the estimated cost and time to completion for all in-scope degree programs.
* The component demonstrates 100% functional accuracy across all tested financial and transfer scenarios defined in the use cases.
* Marketing Content Authors are fully trained and able to update non-logic content and disclaimers using the AEM authoring interface.

**14. Approval Requirements**

Project approval will be granted when the Project Charter is signed by the designated approvers. Subsequent approvals required during the project lifecycle include:

* Approval of detailed requirements and design documents.
* **Mandatory sign-off on the Legal/Compliance Gateway (Milestone 1.2).**
* Approval of the test plan and successful sign-off on User Acceptance Testing (UAT).
* Approval from the Executive Sponsor to proceed with production deployment.

**15. Approvals**

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| **Prepared By** | **Kate Herrick** | **Project Manager** | **October 2025** |
| Approved By |  | Executive Sponsor |  |
| Approved By |  | Legal Counsel |  |
| Approved By |  | Mike Goettl, IT Director |  |